

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please delete claim 21. Please amend claims 1 and 2 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A sealing material comprising a tape comprising a laminate having a height and a width and comprising a plurality of expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene ~~film~~films, wherein the height of the laminate is greater than the width of the laminate.
2. (currently amended) A sealing material according to Claim 1, wherein said laminate has end faces along said height and the end faces ~~are adapted~~ are adapted to contact tightened surfaces of a vessel to be sealed.
3. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 2, wherein an adhesive component is applied to at least one end face of said laminate.
4. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 3, wherein release paper is applied to the adhesive component.
5. (original) A sealing material comprising a plurality of laminates according to Claim 1,
6. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 5, wherein said laminates have end faces along said height and an adhesive component is provided on at least one end face.
7. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 5, wherein the laminates are joined by being thermally fused using a tetrafluoroethylene-hexafluoropropylene copolymer film or tetrafluoroethylene-perfluoroalkyl vinyl ether copolymer film.
8. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 1, wherein at least one layer for preventing fluid penetration is interposed in the laminate.
9. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 8, wherein the layer for preventing fluid penetration comprises a fluoro resin film.

10. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 9, wherein the fluoro-resin film comprises a compact polytetrafluoroethylene film.

11. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 10, wherein the compact polytetrafluoroethylene film comprises an expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene in which the pores have been crushed flat under pressure.

12. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 1, wherein the laminate is adhesively unified through sintering of the expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene films.

13. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 1 which has been joined at the longitudinal beginning and end to form a closed ring, wherein the direction in which the laminated strips have been laminated is the radial direction of the closed ring.

14. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 13, wherein the beginning and end are joined by adhesion with double sided adhesive tape.

15. (original) A method for producing a sealing material in the form of tape, comprising the steps of:

laminating a predetermined number of sheets of expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene film to produce a first laminate;

slitting the first laminate to a predetermined width to obtain laminates in the form of strips having a height and a width, said height being greater than said width, with end faces along said height; and

affixing or applying an adhesive to the end faces.

16. (original) A method for producing a sealing material in the form of tape according to Claim 15, comprising cutting and spreading out an expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene film laminate in the form of a cylinder which has been obtained by being wrapped around a mandrel.

17. (original) A method for producing a sealing material according to Claim 16, wherein a fluoro-resin film is interposed in the first laminate.
18. (original) A method for producing a sealing material according to Claim 17, wherein the fluoro-resin film comprises a compact polytetrafluoroethylene film, said compact polytetrafluoroethylene film comprising a spirally laminated expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene film in which the pores have been crushed flat under pressure.
19. (original) A method for producing a sealing material according to Claim 15, comprising a step for sintering the first laminate after the step for producing the first laminate and before the step for slitting it to a predetermined width.
20. (original) A sealing material according to claim 8 wherein said layer for preventing fluid penetration comprises an elastomer.
21. (cancelled)